

Highway increases manpower by 70 jobs

About 70 Highway Division positions are being filled in the construction and technical services branches, reports Carl Hobson, head of Personnel Operations.

"It appears that these openings will enable us to return all interested laid-off workers to previously held jobs," said Hobson. Several lists of laid-off employees have been depleted and his office is now using agency promotion lists and open competitive recruitment in hiring new workers.

Recent studies revealed that

ODOT has not been up to its budgeted manpower strength, according to Highway Division officials.

After the lay-offs in 1976, the attrition rate snow-balled faster than officials anticipated, leaving ODOT in the position of having fewer employees than were planned for at the end of the lay-offs.

In Technical Services, 25 positions, most in the environmental and engineering sections are being filled.

"Most are being filled through

agency promotions, although a few in environmental and five right-of-way trainees are being hired through open recruitment," Hobson said.

Forty-five engineering jobs, which have been frozen since the lay-offs, have been added to the Construction Branch field crews throughout the state.

"We anticipate filling the field engineering technician 1 and 2 and the HE 1 positions through promotions," Hobson said, adding that this will cause a "ripple effect",

meaning that 45 new aides will be hired to take the places left by workers who will be promoted.

LCDC planning coordinator jobs at the HE 3 level will also be added in each region, thus adding to the ripple effect.

"The exam is now open for engineering aides," he said.

All positions are allowed for in the current budget. However, more persons will be hired if voters approve the May gas tax and November vehicle registration fee increases.

6-year plan near approval; sale of bonds is possible

An expanded Six-Year Highway Improvement Program is being readied for final approval at the next meeting of the Oregon Transportation Commission.

The expanded program will follow guidelines agreed upon at the Jan. 24 commission meeting in Salem.

At that meeting, commissioners endorsed over \$60 million worth of highway projects beyond those contained in the preliminary six-year program and agreed to a future bond sale if other means of financing were not sufficient.

Impetus for the expanded program came from numerous project requests at 39 public meetings held statewide in October and November to discuss the preliminary six-year plan.

Region and headquarters staff have estimated that the highest

priority projects from the meeting requests will cost in excess of \$60 million.

Although willing to issue bonds to finance highway projects, commissioners made it clear that no bonds will be sold unless voters approve both the May two cent gas tax and November \$10 vehicle registration fee increases.

When commissioners meet again on Feb. 22 in Coos Bay, they will be asked to adopt a final Six-Year Highway Improvement Program containing three levels of project funding:

PROGRAM "B" based upon current revenue sources (\$138 million worth of non-interstate projects).

PROGRAM "A" based upon current revenue plus revenue from the two cent gas tax and \$10 vehicle registration increases (\$285 million worth of non-interstate projects).

PROGRAM "A+" based upon sale of bonds or other additional revenue above that from current sources and the gas tax and vehicle registration fee increases. For bonding details about the program, see page three.

Carpoolers may rent state cars

State workers in carpools may soon be allowed to drive state cars to and from work.

"We're still working the proposal and no rules have been adopted yet," said Bernice Teeter, administrator of the motor pool in the Department of General Services.

"We expect to begin a six-to-nine week trial program in February or March."

Ms. Teeter has been gathering feedback the past month from state workers on the proposed rules for the program she announced in mid-December.

The 1977 Legislature passed a bill containing a paragraph that allows state employees to "rent" state vehicles who live more than 12 miles from work and agree to form carpools.

State cars would be used only for commuting to and from work, according to the plan.

"We began this program to save energy and cut down on congestion in Salem," Teeter said. "We are relying on the good sense of participants. Given the public's vigilance about state-owned cars already on the highways, I think it would be foolish for state workers to abuse the program. I prefer to think that state workers are honest."

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The MVD is looking into the possibility of buying automatic drive test machines that would replace the written part of drive exams. The MVD says it would save time and eventually money. Vendors displayed models during the Jan. 24 commission meeting in Salem. Right, Commissioner Tom Walsh takes a sample test on a machine from Atkins & Merrill Training Equipment, Inc. of Tulsa, Okla. It was reported later that Walsh flunked the test.

On Wilson Highway:

'Routine' efforts beat deadlines

They didn't need it.

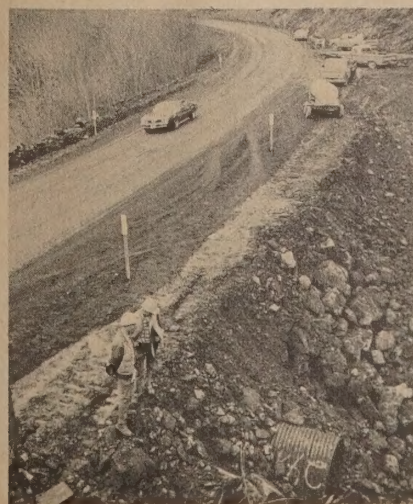
Tillamook maintenance men were already working 12-hour shifts to control floods when a series of storms wiped out a big chunk of



The Wilson River Highway before ...

the Wilson River Highway on Dec. 13.

Logs and debris had clogged the culvert under the road, turning it into a dam. When it collapsed, it



and after reconstruction.

sounded like a cyclone, claiming 300 feet of pavement, a giant crane...and the crew's holiday season.

What happened next is considered routine by maintenance employees—when there's a job to be done, they do it. That meant working day and night for almost a month.

For the flag crew, it meant sandwiches for Christmas Day dinner. For others it often meant getting off work at 11 p.m., and being told to report back at 5:30 a.m.

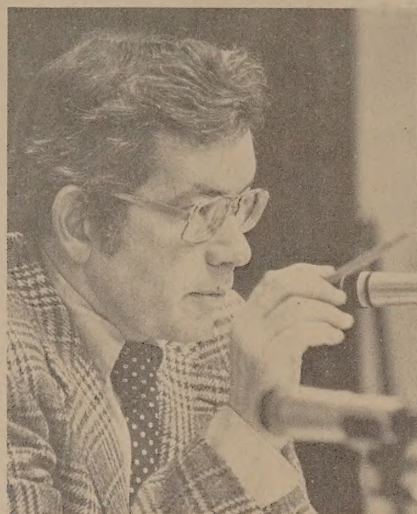
For the district engineer and foremen, it meant pressure. Faced with a gaping 55-foot-deep hole, the schedule was to open a detour by Christmas and rebuild the road by the end of January.

The odds seemed overwhelming, but with a combination of skilled teamwork and luck, the deadlines were beat. In fact, the road was finished two weeks ahead of schedule.

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Director's corner

BOB BURCO



Burco: Oregon needs the best of both bills.

The administration's bill has some good and bad news. It clearly shows some effects of our input, yet misses the target on several of our concerns. There is a substantial increase in flexibility over the use of highway and transit funds due to a reduction in categories for the highway program, and some increased discretion by local decision makers at the state and regional levels.

However, the major federal commitment, as declared by the Carter administration, is to accelerate completion of the interstate highway system with inadequate regard for dealing with the issues that we have raised about meager funding of primary, secondary and urban highways.

Little increase is shown in the administration's bill for these categories of federal aid. There is also no funding increase being sought for the federal highway program.

Congressman James Howard's bill, however, retains most of the categories in previous highway programs which have led to some undue constraints on our ability to program for our highest priorities.

But Howard does recognize the considerable need for increased federal support for non-interstate highway programs. His committee supports about a two billion dollar increase in federal funding for highway programs, most of which would fall into the primary and secondary highway categories.

It unduly emphasizes critical bridge replacements, however, which is of far greater importance to eastern states. The bill would require a two-cent increase in the federal gasoline tax. This has been recognized for some time by the Oregon Transportation Commission as a needed companion to state-level tax increases to fund this program.

We will work with the Oregon congressional delegation extensively during the next several months to see whether we can merge the best aspects of the administration's bill with the funding levels and non-interstate concerns of the Howard bill to gain a funding package in line with Oregon's needs. Final action by the House and Senate is expected in May.

While we aren't entirely satisfied with the administration's draft, we are pleased to have been involved in the discussions leading to it, and feel that open consultation with the states and urban areas has been well worth the effort.

After a year of deliberation and many trips across the country to gain local input, the Carter administration has drafted their version of the 1978 federal-aid highway and transit bill.

Congress will quickly begin to deal with this bill, as well as versions originating in the House and Senate, as they move toward refinancing the major highway and transit programs.

We have been fortunate to host key participants in this process during the past year. Cabinet Secretary Brock Adams visited with us in Portland. Also coming to Oregon were Federal Highway Administrator Bill Cox, UMTA Administrator Dick Page, Congressman Jim Howard, chairman of the house subcommittee on surface transportation, and several other administration representatives.

Editor's mailbag

To the Editor:

On Dec. 11 while visiting in the Oregon City area, I had taken a trip to Tualatin and on the way I stopped at the rest area near West Linn.

I then went on to Tualatin and returned home to discover I had lost my wallet. I racked my brains trying to figure out where it was. One of your employees, John W. Viol, called me to tell me he had found my wallet at the rest area and that he was having coffee at Art's Cafe in Oregon City and would wait for me to come get it.

I insisted on buying him breakfast but he refused. He went out of his way to call me. I thank you for having such a nice man in your employ.

Terry R. Struthers
123 E. 6th
Kennewick, Wn., 99336

To the Editor:

We have relatives in Tillamook and had planned to spend Christmas Day with them. We went there a week ago through Valley Junction. The way was winding and very slow, and it took three hours from Portland.

Christmas Eve, the Highway Division opened a detour on the Wilson River Highway. Thanks to the division and their quickly set-up detour, we could make our trip comfortably and fast.

I realize that the flagmen, too, must have families of their own and I thank them for taking their Christmas and helping us over the road.

A big thanks to everyone for making it a nice Christmas for us.

Mrs. Lawrence Merritt
8730 S.E. Ellis
Portland, Oregon 97266

OH, DOTTIE! By Roy Priem



WHAT KIND OF SLOGAN IS THIS!

Editors support tax hikes ... and horse rest areas

Oregon's newspaper editors last month covered subjects ranging from deteriorating highways to horses in rest areas.

Commenting on the need for a two-cent gas tax increase, the Albany **DEMOCRAT-HERALD** said, "If they're paying attention, Oregon motorists are experiencing what officials in the Highway Division have been saying for some time: The state's highways are beginning to fall apart."

"Drivers who experience these road conditions this winter ought to remember what they saw when the primary election in May, 1978, rolls around."

The Eugene **REGISTER-GUARD** said, "Oregonians are not really excited about highway problems and are even less excited about paying more taxes to take care of those problems."

"Those, unfortunately, are rough conclusions that can be drawn from the results of an opinion survey sponsored by the State Department of Transportation."

Relating current highway woes to weather conditions, the Portland **OREGONIAN** said, "Last week's storm points up once again the major reason for the constant yearly drain on the division's maintenance

funds. It also provides the logical reason behind the division's constant requests for more money to repair Oregon's primary and secondary roads."

Commenting on the possibility of getting the tax measures approved, the paper said, "However, some politicians have deemed the measures unsalable to the public. The reasoning seems to be that road maintenance is not exactly a hot campaign issue."

The Scappoose **COLUMBIA HERALD** said, "Five members of the Scappoose City Council would rather be martyrs than provide the city with a safe highway."

"And, unfortunately, while the council members relish in their psychological martyrdom at the hands of the State Highway Division, city residents and their children may become the real martyrs-victims of accidents on an unsafe highway."

On the lighter side, the Medford **MAIL TRIBUNE** commented on the possibility of providing spaces in rest areas for horses. "Now we read that something new is going to be added, as a result of the increased use of riding horses that are moved by trailer from one show to another, or en route to a horseback-riding area. "This may seem a bit special to

some, but better to provide a place for horses to stretch and relieve themselves under controlled conditions than just anywhere along the side of a public highway."

The **MAIL TRIBUNE** also spoke highly of DOT's efforts to publicize the Six Year Highway Improvement Program by conducting 39 public meetings. The Oregon Transportation Department recently did something that, to our knowledge, has never been done so extensively."

"But it has also had an educational effect on many Oregon citizens, who maybe coming to realize that there is no such thing as a free lunch, in highway construction."

Slogan winners chosen soon

The Public Affairs office in Salem has received 97 slogan contest entries from 22 employees and retirees.

All slogans were sent to Coit-Petzold, a Portland advertising firm, for judging.

The winner will be announced by mid-February; a second, and possibly third, place winner will also be chosen.

The Pendleton **EAST OREGONIAN** in commenting on an AP story concerning problems with the transmission of the Road and Weather Report said, "This week's Associated Press story about botched-up road reports which many travelers rely on seemed out of character for usually efficient Oregon state government."

"Oregonians have a generally efficient and progressive state government. State police and highway officials should be able to come up with a single, reliable road report system."

The **REGISTER-GUARD** sees some problems with the current Sno-Park permit system. "Hardly anyone quarrels with the Sno-Park permit system, but it's not working as well as it should. Like many new ideas, it's fraught with confusion and lack of implementation."

"It's not easy to buy the permits, which sell for \$1 daily and \$5 seasonally. Advance publicity by the state Department of Motor Vehicles, the outfit that administers the program, said the parking permits would be available from their field offices, which they are, and from ski shops, sporting goods stores, etc., from which, generally speaking, they aren't."



Adolph Dowdy, left, and Don Hollett, got a chance to relax after the Wilson River Highway reconstruction was under control.

Teamwork key to success

Cont. from page one

"At first there was a rumor that the road would be closed for 60 days," said District Engineer Eldon Everton. "But the rumor didn't start from this office."

That prompted a visit from Operations Chief Fred Klaboe and Highway Engineer Scott Coulter. A local news story stirred their concern, Coulter said.

"Tillamook had been looking at alternative routes for the detour," Coulter said. "After looking at it, we decided to open a detour next to the road by Christmas."

Ted Litchfield, region operations engineer, added, "The men were then told that they could have Christmas Day off if they finished the detour on time. So they opened it the day before."

The Highway Division hasn't received word yet on whether federal money will be available to restore flood-damaged highways. The division has applied for Federal Highway Relief Funds in early January. Damage throughout the state is estimated at \$4 million.

The challenge was especially keen for Maintenance Foreman Adolph Dowdy. He had moved from Parkdale (near Hood River) to begin the job just the day before the floods hit.

"Ever feel lost, that you had no place to go, didn't know your crew?" he said. "I know maintenance like the palm of my hand, but when something like this happens. . ."

Ironically, Dowdy's former station at Parkdale was the site of another major road washout on Highway 35 in December.

"I would have been hit either way," he mused.

The hardest task was to appoint Christmas Day workers, he said. "I would have rather taken a beating -- still, nobody complained."

The 11-member maintenance crew grew to about 25, with extra crews coming from Salem, Astoria and the Parks Branch.

"We had tremendous local cooperation," Everton said. "We made it a point to hire here, and we got the job done just as fast as if we'd hired from Portland."

Forty feet of logs and debris were cleared, and a one-lane detour was built over the debris adjacent to the wash-out section. Although traffic was limited, Everton noted that a mobile home easily made it through.

The new section was designed with future slide problems in mind.

A steel rack was installed in front

of the culvert to prevent it from again becoming blocked in future storms. The rack will catch the debris and allow water to flow through the culvert.

The hole was then filled with about 25,000 yards of crushed rock from quarries on both sides of the site. A 72-inch metal pipe was installed above the culvert already in place, to carry the overflow of water from the lower culvert and prevent future loss of fill.

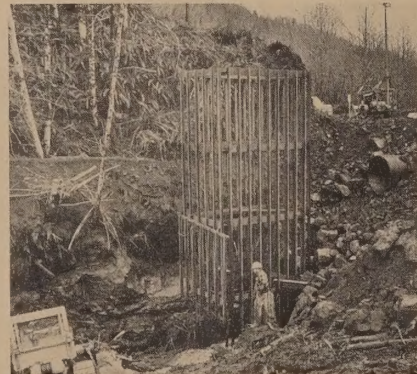
"I'm confident that we won't lose this section again," Everton said. "It's stronger now than it was before."

The highway will always be plagued with slides and washouts, Everton said, because of the nearby steep canyons. Logs still fill many of the narrow gullies, and another heavy storm could send them down the canyon, causing more washouts.

"Finding a good, close rock source sent us ahead of schedule," Everton said. "Our timing and teamwork was perfect."

After the two-lane, graveled road opened Jan. 7, exhausted crews returned to their families and normal work schedules.

"If anyone deserves credit for pulling the whole thing off, it's Don Hollett," Everton said.



Looking like a trap to catch Bigfoot, this giant steel crib will actually prevent debris from clogging the intake culvert in future flood storms.

Hollett, assistant foreman, took over the entire detour and road building operations on the Wilson River Highway while Dowdy ran other flood relief operations. Both men worked 80- to 85-hour weeks.

"You should have seen Don, scrambling up and down the canyon and rock beds like a mountain goat," Dowdy said. We couldn't have done it without him."

Hollett shrugged and passed the praise on to the crew. "Everybody pulled together -- we all did'er, and not a complaint was heard."

"We just pulled on our gloves and went to work."

New team investigates dealers; spreads word about stiffer law

"We've barely scraped the tip of the iceberg," says Merle Graham, head of the MVD's new investigative unit.

Since November, Graham and assistant El Keller have been busy inspecting car dealers and uncovering "curbstone" (unlicensed) dealers in the Portland and Salem areas. Both have worked for the division for over 20 years and have law enforcement experience.

There were over 2,000 dealerships in Oregon to cover. A third investigator, yet to be named, will inspect businesses outside the Portland area.

Inspections were authorized by the 1977 Legislature, as part of a revision of the state's dealer license laws.

"The law tightened the definition of a dealer," Graham says. "It's now illegal to sell cars, other than the car you have registered in your name, for a profit without a dealer's license."

The team checks dealers for compliance with dealer licensing, vehicle title and registration provisions of the law. Graham and Keller also keep their eyes open for stolen vehicles and rolled-back odometers.

The team gets good cooperation from licensed car dealers. "They're the ones hurt by the illegal dealers," Graham says, "and often lead us to the curbstoners."

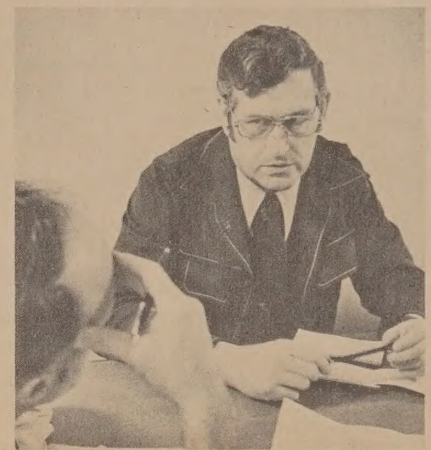
Much of their time is spent explaining the new law to dealers. "Many don't realize what they're

doing is illegal and either stop or buy a license."

If they don't buy a license and continue selling cars, the MVD turns the case over the police and the dealer can be charged with a Class A misdemeanor.

At least one operation has been closed down and several other arrests have been made.

The rate of odometer roll-backs has especially surprised Graham. "It's a multi-million dollar racket," he says, adding that more than 6,000 "roll-back specials" a year may be coming to Oregon where they are sold to unsuspecting buyers. A roll-back refers to a car with an odometer that has been changed to show fewer miles than it has actually traveled.



Merle Graham, right, confers with a car dealer.

Bond program explained

Q: What's the difference between bonds and other sources of revenue?

A: Bonds are like a loan. ODOT borrows money from private investors to finance projects now and agrees to repay the loan, with interest, over a period of years. The gas tax and other sources of revenue are more like a regular paycheck and from them ODOT can finance only as many projects as current income allows.

Q: If the 1973 Legislature authorized ODOT to sell \$150 million worth of bonds, why haven't they been sold?

A: Soon after that Legislature adjourned, we found ourselves in the energy crisis. Sales of gasoline slowed

and gas tax revenue dropped. After selling just \$25 million worth of bonds, the commission learned that there might not be enough future income to pay back the principal and interest as well as continue the regular highway maintenance and preservation programs. No bonds have been sold for several years.

Q: If revenue projections are still bleak, why is a bond sale being considered now?

A: The commission will not sell any more bonds unless additional revenue can be guaranteed. That is why the bond sale now under discussion depends upon passage of both the gas tax measure in May and the vehicle registration measure in November.

Program to be self-sustaining

Cont. from page one

The program must be self-sustaining, she added. The amount of rent to be charged state workers is yet undetermined.

Cars will revert to the motor pool during weekday work and are to be parked at the carpools' homes during weekends. The state would keep the cars gassed, pay for insurance and monitor use of the vehicles, under Teeters proposal.

To qualify as a carpool the rules require at least three state employees, two of whom live at least 25 miles roundtrip from work.

"The 25-mile figure is still flexible, however," Teeter said.

Some state workers have expressed fear that the proposed rules are too loose and leave opportunity for abuse. Public Transit Division employees in ODOT believe the plan will work, provided some changes are made.

"We responded to the proposal in a letter questioning how state carpools would affect the profits of existing public transit, such as the chartered bus which commutes daily from Portland to Salem," said Dave Paoli of the transit division.

"After the guidelines are set, departments will have to submit individual plans for implementing it," Paoli said. He noted that ODOT is assigned about 1,300 sedans, which is the largest share of the state's pool.

The Public Transit Division recommends two changes to the plan. They are, (1), that state carpools and vanpools not be used between cities that have existing public transit services for commuters, and (2), most of the administrative burden of the program be assumed by the Department of General Services, rather than the agencies whose employees want to carpool.

Opinion poll:

Public transit supported

This is fifth in a series of in-depth looks into the statewide opinion poll commissioned by ODOT. General findings were outlined in September's VIA.

When Respondents were asked to choose between more new roads or more buses, buses were favored. But a statement pitting buses against road repair yielded a mixed reaction.

QUESTION: Assuming we need additional transportation, I would prefer to see more roads than buses.

	Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
Agree	30%	32%	29%	28%	28%
Disagree	59	58	53	62	56
Don't Know	11	10	18	10	16

QUESTION: I think too much state money is now going to buy buses rather than to repair roads.

	Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
Agree	31%	36%	33%	24%	29%
Disagree	34	36	19	37	28
Don't Know	35	28	48	39	43

Oregonians uniformly oppose subsidies to private intercity bus companies. The opposition is expressed most strongly in eastern Oregon.

QUESTION: The state should give money to help private bus companies like Greyhound and Trailways on routes where they are losing money because of low ridership.

	Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
Agree	34%	33%	25%	38%	33%
Disagree	56	57	67	52	56
Don't Know	10	10	8	10	11

Respondents' perception of the adequacy of state assistance to city bus systems ranges from "poor" in eastern Oregon to "good" in the metro area. On the nine point scale used, 4.0 stands for "poor", 5.0 for "fair" and 6.0 for "good".

QUESTION: Please rate the quality of the job you think the state is doing in assisting city bus systems.

Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
6.0	6.3	4.7	6.0	5.7

State funding assistance to city bus systems finds more support in the Willamette Valley than elsewhere. The lowest support level is along the coast. On the scale used, 5.0 is "somewhat important", and 6.0 is "important".

QUESTION: Please rate how important you feel funding assistance to city bus systems is. (9 point scale)

Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
6.0	5.9	5.4	6.5	5.1

While the state's role in assisting car pools is rated a solid "fair" except in the Metro area, respondents statewide felt that funding car pool systems is "important".

QUESTION: Please rate the quality of the job you think the state is doing in setting up car pools.

Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
5.4	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.0

QUESTION: Please rate how important you feel funding setting-up car pools is.

Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
6.2	6.2	5.9	6.2	5.9

One of the more revealing responses in the poll is the wide disparity between how the public perceives existing passenger train service and how willing they are to allocate state funds to improve service. The 4.3 "poor" quality score was the lowest by far on a list of 14 ODOT functions, with the 5.4 "fair" rating for car pools being the next lowest. The funding support 6.3 "important" rating with the fifth highest on the list of 14.

QUESTION: Please rate the quality of the job you think the state is doing in providing a passenger railroad system between cities.

Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
4.3	4.2	5.1	4.1	4.6

QUESTION: Please rate how important you feel funding providing a passenger railroad system between cities is.

Oregon	Tri-County Metro	East	Valley	Coast
6.3	6.5	6.2	6.6	4.9

Survey results encourage transit planning, programs

A survey taken last summer to determine the public's view on Oregon transportation needs revealed strong support for public transit. And that's an encouraging sign for Dennis Moore, ODOT's Public Transit Division administrator.

VIA interviewed Moore on his reactions to the survey in general, and some specific questions outlined in the poll story, also on this page. "As an administrator, you constantly worry about being out on a limb regarding public sentiment," he said. "The poll shows that we're right on, and encourages us to push ahead with transit programs."

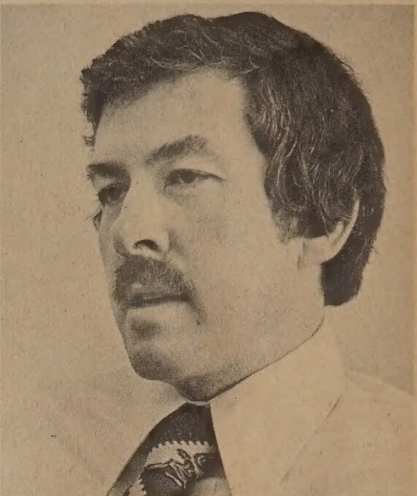
The survey consisted of over 800 personal interviews of randomly-selected adults. On an open-ended section of the questionnaire, Oregonians consistently mentioned the need for better public transit.

Moore said he's worried about "upstaging" the Highway Division. "The poll reads almost like I commissioned it myself," he said. "I don't want public transit to be over-emphasized. We're all working together, inter-dependently."

Moore noted that the public views cars as the major mode today. "But they definitely want alternatives such as buses, carpools and passenger rail systems, for the future," he said, "which is also one of our main concerns in the division."

The division's current goal is to improve existing public transit modes, such as busses, within cities. Planners have identified 26 small communities that need better service, he said.

By 1990, the division hopes to connect cities with more bus fleets, or passenger rail service.



Dennis Moore

The administrator is surprised by the public's opposition to subsidize private inter-city bus companies. "Fifty-six percent oppose subsidizing, he said.

"I guess people just think of dirty terminals, when, in fact, the intercity bus system is the life line for many Oregon cities - and they're going broke. This tells us that we need to do a better job informing the public."

Moore was also surprised at the high degree of support for improving passenger rail systems. "It lends more credibility to the effect of the Willamette Valley Rail Study Committee."

Moore plans to send copies of the poll's open-ended responses to several city officials in Oregon.

"Knowing the public's attitude about transportation not only helps us but will give added direction to city planners," he said.



ELEVEN YEARS WITHOUT AN ACCIDENT. That's a department record. This Salem engineering crew, headed by Loren Weber, has worked over 428,000 man-hours without an accident. They were presented a safety award during the Jan. 24 Transportation Commission meeting. In front: Dan Read, left, and Phil Fields. In back, from left, are Pete Fidler, Fred Lucht, Harlan Naegeli and Murray Colwell. Not pictured is Gordon Cannon.

Banfield project meetings set

A series of informational meetings will precede the April 6 public hearing on the Portland Banfield Transitway project. The meetings will be held on March 7, 9 and 14.

Focus of the three pre-hearing meetings will be the environmental impact statement draft, which lists five alternatives including no-build, low cost improvements, extended

high occupancy vehicle lanes, exclusive busway and light rail system.

Staffers from the ODOT Metro office and Tri-Met will explain the alternatives and answer questions. The meetings are being publicized through newspaper advertisements, radio announcements and television public service spots.

ODOT collects from negligent drivers

Who gets the bill when errant drivers damage guardrails, signs and other highway structures? Oregon taxpayers?

Not if Jack Sollis, maintenance secretary Marilyn McHugh and district engineers can help it.

Year-end reports show that ODOT collected \$281,848 from drivers or their insurance companies after claims were filed by ODOT's Damage Claim Section. Annual collections average \$250,000 says Sollis, assistant attorney general and ODOT counsel.

In about 80 percent of the accidents where structures are damaged by negligent drivers, claims are filed. Drivers are charged for material, labor and equipment used to make repairs.

"Considering that I put in just 10 percent of my time on claims, and we have one full-time secretary, we get a pretty good return," he adds.

"The real success lies with the district engineers," he adds. "They have good rapport with local police. As soon as something happens, they take photos, track down leads and send us the reports. We take it from

there."

District engineers, or field workers, often have to chase vehicles, Sollis said. For instance, drivers of big trucks have unknowingly hit bridge spans and continued driving.

"One driver pulled into a weigh station with crumbled concrete on top of his truck," Sollis said. Paint scrapings at the site of the damage have also been used for leads to drivers who have left the scene.

Thirty days after the first request for payment of damages is made, a demand letter is sent. Ten days later, legal proceedings to collect begin if the driver fails to respond. Drivers' licenses and registrations can be withheld until drivers pay restitution, Sollis notes.

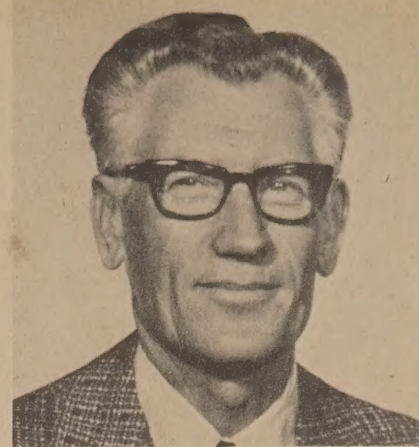
Most drivers are good about paying, so ODOT has an easy-payment, installment plan; presently about 25 drivers are using it to pay off damage charges.

But collection isn't easy when drivers move frequently or live out-of-state. "Sometimes it's more costly to track them down than it's

worth," Sollis says, noting that \$18,000 worth of claims were dropped last year. Most of these involved non-residents.

Claims average between \$100 and \$300, but a few have netted more. For instance, when a truck dumped a load of liquid asphalt on a highway last year, the state secured \$25,000 for repairs.

The Washington DOT is planning a similar damage claims procedure, Sollis says. "They talked recently with me about it and were surprised at our success."



Purl Arensmeier

We'll always remember...

When Local Government Unit employees hear cheerful whistling outside their office door, they get a strange, sad feeling.

"I think of Purl when I hear whistling - he had a unique kind of trill. Sometimes I almost expect him to walk through the door," remembers Don Harwell, former co-worker and life-long friend of Purl Arensmeier.

Arensmeier, 60, died of leukemia on Jan. 1, 1978. He worked 32 years for the Highway Division, first in the Traffic Section and later as an abandonment engineer in the Local Government Unit in Salem.

"He was always cheerful and witty," says Harwell, city-county coordinator for Project Management Section. "He was an avid golfer,

biker and walker. Arensmeier contracted leukemia in early October. He worked until a few days before his death.

"Purl was always on the job between treatments for his illness," Harwell says. "In fact he completed a major exchange of roads between ODOT and Lane County while he was sick."

A week before his death, Harwell remembers Purl saying, "You know, I'm really thankful for this job. I don't have to set home and think about it."

Born in Redmond, Arensmeier was graduated from high school and served in the U.S. Army from 1942 to 1945.

He leaves his wife Wilma and children David, Doug and Sherri.

Promotions:

Movin' up the ranks...

Arnold J. Allen, HWY, maintenance worker 3 to maintenance supervisor 1, Adel.

Robert C. Blensley, ADMIN, planner 3 to planner 4 in Policy and Program Development Section, Salem.

Helga Boyd, HWY, engineering technician 3 in Landscape Unit to ET 4 in Final Design Unit, Salem.

Leon G. Brock HWY, engineer 1 in Region 3 to HE 2, METRO.

Walter E. Clay, Jr., HWY, engineer 2 in Project Management to HE 3 in the Traffic Section, Salem.

Adolph M. Dowdy, HWY, maintenance supervisor 1 in Parkdale to supervisor 2, Tillamook.

Blaine L. Evinger, HWY, maintenance worker 1 to MW 2, Cascade Locks.

Tony D. Faro, HWY, laborer 1 to 2, La Grande.

Jerry L. Favero, PARKS, ranger 1 at Shore Acres State Park to ranger 2 at Umpqua Lighthouse State Park.



Ann Scully



Janet Miller
Ranger 1

ranger 2 at LaPine State Recreation Area.

William Maish, Jr., HWY, engineering technician 2 to highway engineer 1, Portland.

Larry R. Matheny, HWY, engineer 1 to HE 2, Portland.

Janet S. Miller, PARKS, park aide to ranger 1 at Milo McIver State Park.

Melvin Mohning, HWY, engineering technician 3 in Structural Design in Salem to highway engineer 1 in METRO.

Elizabeth R. McIntyre, ADMIN, programmer analyst to systems analyst in Data Processing, Salem.

Steve Petersen, PARKS, conservation aide at Guy Talbot State Park to park ranger 1 at Fort Stevens State Park.

Faye M. Pitts, HWY, accounting clerk 1 to accounting clerk 2 in Highway Accounting Section, Salem.

David Powers, PARKS, highway engineer 1 to historic preservation coordinator, Salem.

B. H. Rathod, HWY, engineer 1 to HE 2, Portland.

Gerald A. Roberts, PARKS, park aide at Beverly Beach State Park to park ranger 1 at Fort Stevens State Park.

Fredrick A. Sawyer, HWY, maintenance worker 1 to engineering technician 1, Portland.

Robert H. Schalk, HWY, engineer 2 to HE 3, METRO.

Ann M. Scully, PARKS, park aide at Detroit Lake State Park to ranger 1 at Silver Falls State Park.

John Stucky, HWY, engineering technician 1 in Portland to engineer 1 in Milwaukie.

C. L. Swearingen, HWY, maintenance worker 3 to maintenance worker 4 in Klamath Falls.

Tim H. Thex, HWY, engineering technician 1 in Region 3 to engineer 1 in METRO.

Donald H. Wilson, HWY, maintenance supervisor 1 to supervisor 2, Eugene.



Adolph Dowdy
Maintenance Supervisor

Dolores R. Foos, ADMIN, key punch operator 1 to operator 2, Salem.

Robert C. Franklin, PARKS, ranger 2 at Fort Stevens State Park to park manager 1 at Hat Rock State Park.

Jordan Hamilton, HWY, heavy equipment mechanic trainee to heavy equipment mechanic 1, Bend.

Warren M. Hulbert, PARKS, park manager 1 at Umpqua Lighthouse State Park to manager 2 at Harris Beach State Park.

Daniel D. Keeler, HWY, engineering aide in The Dalles to ET 1, North Bend.

Marvin O. Krueger, PARKS, ranger 1 to ranger 2 at Champoe State Park.

Johnathan D. Lenker, PARKS, ranger 1 at Susan Creek State Park to

Trans-Trivia

TRANSPORTATION QUIZ

Trans-trivia begins this month. It's a monthly quiz on interesting or unique ODOT facts, past or present. Test yourself, then find the right answers on page seven.

1. When were the first center lines painted on Oregon highways?
a. 1923 b. 1935 c. 1948

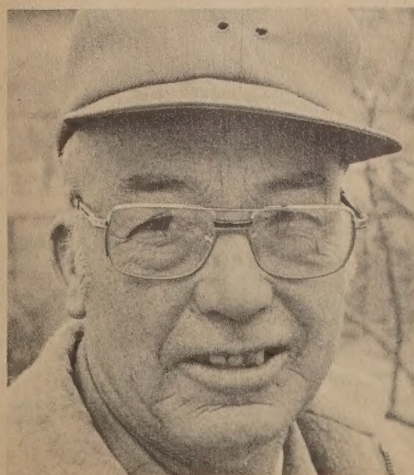
2. How many aircraft were registered by the Aeronautics Division in 1977?
a. 4,004 b. 9,227 c. 16,574

3. In which year did applicants for a driver's license first have to pass both written and drive tests?
a. 1921 b. 1931 c. 1945

4. The Oregon law which allows the public to freely use the beaches was passed by the Legislature in what year?
a. 1917 b. 1953 c. 1967

5. The first land purchased by the Highway Commission for a park area is now known as:
a. Emigrant Springs State Park b. Holman Wayside c. Helmick State Park.

Know any unusual or interesting facts about ODOT? Send quiz suggestions to the VIA editor, room 104, Transportation Building, Salem.



Lewis G. Hadley
34 years

More retirees in December are announced

The following employees retired during December:

Ernest R. Campbell, highway maintenance worker 3, Portland; eight years, six months.

Lewis G. Hadley, highway maintenance foreman 1, Lakeview; 34 years.

Lester V. Blickenstaff, highway engineer 4; Bandon; 32 years, six months.

Elderly F. Charles, weighmaster 1, Central Point; 27 years.



Jerry Robertson is VIA's inquiring photographer. He selects his own subjects. VIA's editors frame the question of the month. Answers are edited only for length.

CANDID COMMENTS

Should state employees in carpools be allowed to drive state cars to and from work?



MILFRED JONES, HWY
Electrician, Salem

No. Those who live in the proposed carpool areas live there by choice and should finance their transportation. Even though they pay a small fee, I don't feel they could cover the total vehicle and administrative cost. All state-owned vehicles should be used for state business only. If the state has enough cars that they feel they can rent them out, maybe they have more than they need.



EARL OZMENT, HWY
MW 1, Pendleton

I think we should give it a try. It should work as long as people don't go shopping on the way home, or don't take care of the cars. In Eastern Oregon, though, it could be a problem because of the long distance a carpooler would have to drive.



GLORIA WILLHITE, HWY
Secretary, Milwaukie

I think the use of a state-owned vehicle while carpooling, under certain conditions, is a good idea. There should be rules, of course, and be monitored to be sure these rules are obeyed.



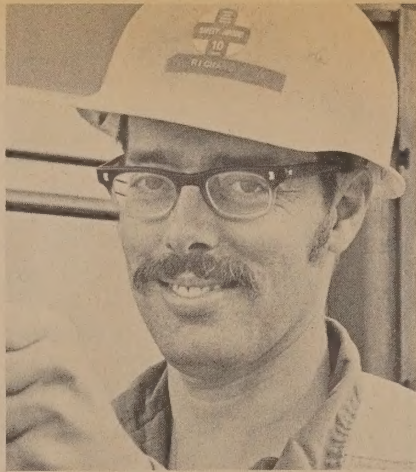
EDWARD TSCHIDA, HWY
Maintenance Foreman 1, Milwaukie

No. Extra privileges create extra problems. Private citizens, whether they work for the state or not, may have a tendency to use state cars for other than state business. I think using shuttle busses this way would be more appropriate, because you have one driver rather than several, to keep track of. Also, what relations with the public will we create?



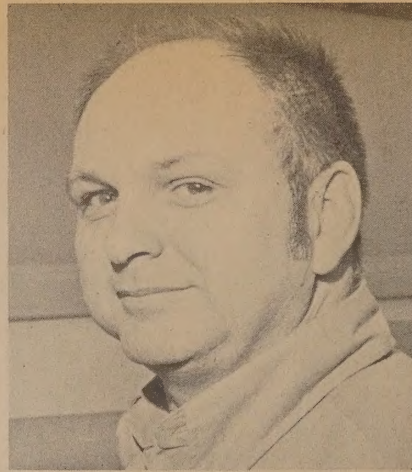
SHIRLEY HOY, AERO
Administrative Assistant, Salem

No. I think this concept would be a misuse of public funds and property and would in all probability lead to abuse of the privilege by some, thus becoming another target for criticism of state employees by the public.



DICK HART, HWY
Technician 1, Coquille

I could see where it would work with strict regulations, but I think the government is doing enough for us already. People should take the initiative to form their own carpools, then there wouldn't be any problem with public opinion on the use of state cars for carpools.



DON BILLINGS, HWY
HE 3, METRO

Many private enterprises allow some of their employees to use company-owned vehicles for personal transportation. But this is one of the many double standards that we face as state employees. With the problems that ODOT has had in the past with increased tax measures, I believe a program of this nature would be bad public relations.

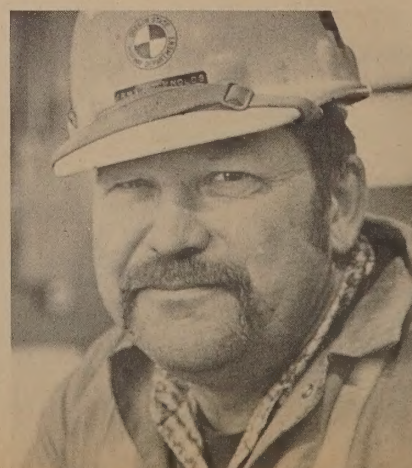


ARLENE RAMSAY, MVD
MVR 2, Woodburn

Since one of the requirements of renting a car would be that you revert the car to the general motor pool during weekday work hours, I don't believe that many people would be interested. Most people don't enjoy walking in inclement weather to work. This program would benefit people who work in Salem only.

JALAINÉ MADURA, TRANSIT
Assistant Program Manager, Salem

I think it will look bad to the public. Besides, with the added daily mileage, the cars will wear out more quickly. I'd rather see commuters use the charter bus program, or carpool to work in their own cars.



ERNEST REYNOLDS, HWY
HMW 3, The Dalles

It would be fine for populated areas, but in a way, it isn't fair to guys in less-populated areas. Some of them have to drive long distances, but because they don't have the men for a carpool, they wouldn't be eligible. It's like taking money from one man's pocket and putting it into another.

Search program can save lives

Ralph McGinnis remembers when searching for a lost plane meant sitting around a map and guessing what might have happened.

"Then several pilots would take off in different directions, covering the suspected search area," says the Aeronautics Division assistant administrator for air operations and safety.

Things have changed. Technology, coupled with a network of volunteer pilots, usually enable a crashed plane to be located within a few hours.

Oregon's Search and Rescue (SAR) Program is coordinated through the Aeronautics Division by McGinnis. Its revenue comes from annual pilot registration fees.

McGinnis heads up air efforts to search for planes reported to be missing, overdue, or down. The Federal Aviation Administration gives word to Salem about missing planes. Once the crash site has been located from the air, local sheriff departments take over ground search and rescue.

The U.S. Air Force is responsible for SAR nationally, McGinnis explains. "They delegate duties to the states," he says. SAR was mandated by Congress in 1957; however Oregon's program began in 1946.

Oregon is divided into 25 search districts, with a search chief in each. The chief dispatches local pilots after he learns from Salem headquarters about a missing or crashed plane.

McGinnis shares 24-hour "on call" duty with aeronautics officials Paul Burket, Roger Ritchey and George Hochstetler.

Planes never seem to crash in good weather or in open, flat fields, McGinnis points out. So how can they locate downed aircraft camouflaged in thick timber, brush or snow?

By using ELTs (emergency locator transmitters) and direction finders.

"The ELT is the first real advancement in search and rescue since I started flying in 1932," McGinnis says.

The ELT sends a radio signal automatically triggered by the impact of a plane crash. It can also be set off manually. All general aviation aircraft, except agricultural spray planes, in Oregon are equipped with ELTs.

"We get many alerts from high-flying planes," McGinnis says, "because of their altitude they can pick up an ELT signal up to 300 miles away."

Lives are saved

Report of a single ELT signal doesn't reveal enough information to act on unless a plane has been reported overdue or missing.

"This indicates how significant the filing of a flight plan is," McGinnis says. "If we have the pilot's flight plan, we can be notified sooner if he is overdue."

Twelve planes located throughout Oregon are equipped with direction finder units. They track down the ELT source. From the air, pilots can often locate the vicinity of a plane. From the ground, rescue parties find the plane using hand-held finders that beep loudly when they approach, and softly when they move away from the plane.

The equipment saved the lives of two crash victims in May, 1976, McGinnis notes. A small plane carrying three persons crashed into Mt. Jefferson.

Within three hours the ELT signal was received by the FAA at Redmond and by 1 a.m. a plane had pinpointed the location. By 5 p.m. the National Guard arrived and had saved two lives.

Wild goose chases

But the ELTs are not without "bugs." Malfunctioning beacons have led many on wild goose chases.

"We can't ignore the signal because it could lead to saving a life," McGinnis says, "yet chasing down false signals has wasted time."

One incident involved a cat knocking an ELT off a mantle in a pilot's home. McGinnis had tracked that one down by using a hand-held finder which lead him to the door of the pilot's home.

NASA is developing a new ELT locating system, to be ready in about four years. A tracking satellite will be capable of locating and transmitting information about the downed aircraft beacon within minutes.

After the state began using ELTs and finders, only two reports of missing planes remain unsolved. But Oregon never abandons a search.

"We may suspend active search, but when a clue emerges, we follow the leads," McGinnis says.



Ralph McGinnis displays ELT, left hand, and direction finder, right hand.

Writing class catches on: teacher almost 'full-time'

Teaching writing has almost become a full-time job for Frank Neisius, secretary in MVD's Document Issue Branch.

Since November, about 50 Salem workers have taken the writing workshop and more continue to sign up. Neisius, a former high school English teacher, will continue the week-long morning sessions until the list expires.

And that may be a while yet, because the response has been enthusiastic.

"I want everyone in my office to take the class," said Shirley Kinyon, head of the Power Typing Unit. "I feel more confident in my writing and can pick out mistakes and poor writing habits in the work we deal with here -- which is most of the letters the MVD sends out."

The workshop has helped Joan Dustan, supervisor of the File and Records Unit, begin re-writing position descriptions.

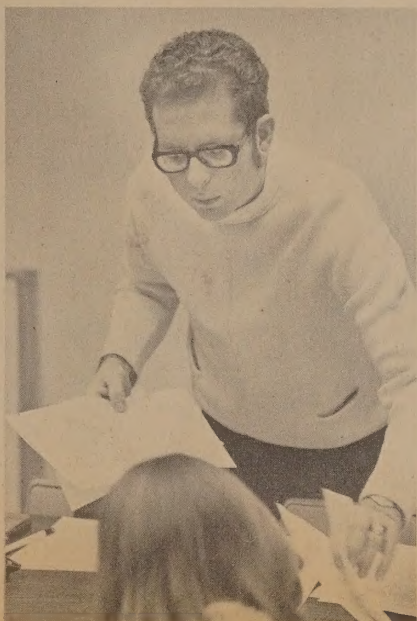
"Sometimes I used terms nobody could understand in the descriptions," she said, "now I hope to make them more readable."

Focusing on the MVD

Ms. Dustan preferred the MVD workshop over a college level writing class she had taken. "Frank's class concentrated on our problems, using examples of poorly written, confusing letters or wordy documents."

Others interviewed echoed similar feelings. All noted on their critiques of the class that it was very worthwhile.

Dorothy Hoover, Document Issue



Frank Neisius collects writing assignments during his workshop.

Branch manager, called for the workshop because she felt there was a need to improve form letters, such as vehicle registration and driver license renewal notices. Some letters have been revised, she noted.

Teaching a uniform writing style is another workshop goal, which will eliminate time-wasting confusion over how to punctuate sentences.

"Our main goal is to make letters friendly," Neisius said. "The world looks at bureaucracy as cold and not caring. If we can at least make our correspondence more personal, the workshop will be worth it."

Way Back When ...



Prison life in 1910 often meant hard labor on the "rock pile," but it also meant crushed rock for Oregon's roads. Above, at the Kelly Butte Prison near Portland, inmates broke rock out of the cliff with picks; sometimes they used black powder to blast it out. Then, using sledge hammers, they broke it into usable roadbed rock. Manual labor has been replaced by bulldozers, jaw and roll crushers and other machines including screening devices used to separate rock sizes.

Aero advisory group to start

To increase communication between the public and the Aeronautics Division, a nine-member advisory committee will be named soon, reports Aeronautics Administrator Paul Burket.

The action was approved at the Jan. 24 Transportation Commission meeting. The commission will appoint two members from each of Oregon's four congressional districts. A member-at-large will be appointed based on the geographical distribution of Oregon registered pilots.

The group will serve as a sounding board for the administrator on aviation issues.

Members are to have broad public and aviation interests and will serve four-year terms and be subject to reappointment.

Ideas sought for trans week

New ideas are being sought for planning National Transportation Week to be held May 14 to 20, announces Robert Gormsen, coordinator for the event.

ODOT again plans to schedule an open house, displays and other activities. The Salem headquarters will supply services to region offices.

About 1,500 person visited ODOT's open houses throughout the state last May 19.

An organizational meeting will be held soon, Gormsen notes.

Safe drivers feted

Winners of the Regional Safe Driving Awards were announced recently by State Highway Engineer Scott Coulter.

They include: Milwaukie Section Crew (Ralph C. Dimick, foreman), urban region; Newport Section Crew, (Melvin Beachy, foreman), rural, west of the Cascades; Alkali Lake Section Crew, (Richard B. Stoeckel, foreman), rural, east of the Cascades; Enterprise Section Crew, (Hubert M. Murrill, foreman), snow region.

The Alkali crew has a record for driving for 12 years without a vehicle accident to become the winner of the Rural East Award.

ANSWERS TO TRANS-TRIVIA
QUIZ: 1, a; 2, a; 3, b; 4, c; 5, b.

John Descutner:

'Giving drive tests isn't as exciting as people think'



John Descutner begins a drive exam. Helping drivers feel relaxed is an important part of the job.

By Shannon Priem Allen

He's sought an acting career on Broadway. He's been a writer, editor and film producer for the aerospace industry. He attended Kent State University amidst armed militia, student revolt and subsequent shootings. He's portrayed Macbeth and other roles in over 150 plays. He is 42, handsomely gray-haired and is married to a beautiful dancer.

This doesn't sound like the kind of man who would wear a gold MVD jacket, issue vehicle titles and give driving exams in Eugene.

But after stacking up varied jobs and lifestyles, and living in New York, San Francisco and the Midwest, John Descutner landed at the division in 1972 and plans to stay.

"I like the job. I like working with people," says Descutner, an MVR at the Eugene field office. "The routine of an 8-to-5 job gives me more time to spend with my

family. And it gives me evenings for theater."

John Descutner says he threatens to retire from theatre after each production. Acting takes energy. It robs evenings and weekends. But it's a hobby he loves.

"I wonder why I start something at first. Then I get into the part and I'm hooked again," he says.

Acting professionally, however, wasn't what he expected. He had the classic dream: "I went to Broadway to become a star," he says, mildly sarcastic.

"I became disillusioned there," he says, remembering nine months of struggling in 1956. "You have to have a huge ego to force yourself into a career. The competition is fierce," says Descutner, who was in one Off-Broadway production. "Fifty guys, all talented and perfect for the part would audition for a show. How do you get picked? They pick someone they know."

Life in New York wasn't what he

expected either. "It's a good place to be if you're extremely rich or extremely poor," he says. "The rich can take advantage of the culture. The poor can discard their identity and pan-handle. Being in the middle, I couldn't afford the culture; yet my pride wouldn't allow me to grovel."

He spent the next 10 years as a writer and film producer for the aerospace industry. Then Descutner decided to get his bachelor's degree in theater from Kent State.

"My wife, Janet, secured a job in 1972 teaching dance at the University (of Oregon), which is why we're in Eugene," Descutner says, "and I eventually found a job at Motor Vehicles."

As a license examiner, Descutner is amused by the images conjured up by the public about his profession. "A lot of people think this job is exciting and scary," he laughs.

"Over 90 percent of those we test are competent drivers," he adds, "but when we do get the 'thrills' we get as many from persons who have driven for 25 years as we do from 16-year-olds."

Experienced drivers are especially guilty of bad habits, he says, like rolling stops, stopping in crosswalks or failing to check the blind spot before changing lanes. "Patterns are formed over years and are hard to break," he says.

There are two ways to flunk a drive test. A driver can make enough small errors to fall below a passing score of 70 percent, or he can make one GFIF (grounds for immediate failure) mistake. Examples: Driving through a red light, turning left into on-coming traffic.

Descutner doesn't have hair-raising stories to tell, but he's been on some interesting rides. His first exam was given to a woman who had failed five previous tests. "I gave her a sixth failure," he said.

"Another driver, unaware, turned left into a busy street in front of a log truck—little things like that can be somewhat frightening," he said.

A common GFIF is to turn the

wrong way down a one way street.

"The first thing to do is don't panic. If there's no immediate danger, you wait for them to comprehend the situation. Then you calmly help them extricate themselves, which usually means doing something illegal, like backing up or U-turning."

"It's interesting to note the variety of realizations," Descutner says. "I've gotten everything from exasperated 'oh my God!' to a quiet 'oh,' to a simple 'am I doing something wrong?'"

The important thing is to be friendly. Make them feel

"We do not automatically flunk 16-year-olds on their birthdays—we also don't try to trick drivers."

comfortable, he says. Descutner believes nervousness can either harm or improve driving ability.

"It's like opening night stage fright. The key is being able to control your emotions; to let your adrenaline work to your advantage," he says.

The public has two common misconceptions about license examiners. "Number one, we do not automatically flunk 16-year-olds on their birthdays," Descutner says with a laugh. "We're delighted to see good drivers. Why would we want them to come back?"

"We also don't try to trick drivers into doing something illegal."

In a job that involves public contact, it's important to have a sense of humor, he says. It relaxes you and the people you deal with.

"Almost everybody drives a car, so we see almost every walk of life, especially in Eugene, being close to the university," he says, "and we get some interesting problems."

The strangest problems seem to happen all at once, he says. "So we laugh about it and ask ourselves which phase the moon is in."

"This happens about every four weeks," he adds with a smile.



Descutner helps customer with her vehicle registration.

Retirees Let Us Know What's Happening

Not enough time

Walter G. Denson, 1078 N. Myrtle, Coquille, 97428, Retired 1973.

Visiting children, grandchildren, fishing and gardening have filled retirement hours for Walter Denson.

"My only regret since retirement is that I do not have enough time to do all the things that I want to do," he writes. "Guess I spend too much time fishing."

Recording King James

Leonard E. Davis, 1303 Dakota Ave., Medford, 97501 -- Retired 1974.

Several heart attacks have slowed down Leonard's lifestyle, but not his avid interest in writing and studying the Bible. He has written two manuscripts on religion, however, neither have been published.

Leonard isn't selfish with his time. He recorded the entire King

James Version of the New Testament for the Southern Oregon Lions Club Center for The Blind and is working on a second recording. He also recorded one of his manuscripts for the center.

Leonard, 59, worked as a weighmaster in Brookings and Medford for 11 years before retiring because of poor health.

Awaiting Salmon Season

Leslie J. Peters, 4136 SE Jackson St., Milwaukie, 97222 -- Retired 1968.

Leslie writes that he enjoyed seeing "the gang" again at a recent retirement dinner in Portland. He enjoys fishing and especially looks forward to spring salmon season.

An old 'Duffer'

Ivan Merchant, 1115 Morningside,

SE, Salem, 97302 -- Retired 1972.

Ivan, former bridge engineer for 14 years, enjoys regular golf rounds with former highway colleagues Gil Decker, Frank Morgan, John Walker, John Oakes and Rod Porter. The

group plays Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Salem Golf Club. He won't admit it, but his friends say he's good with the clubs.

Merchant also enjoys traveling, gardening and raising fruit trees.

Via

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